

Beauty and the Beast

**#1**

**Business Insider, September 9, 2013**

Life really is easier for attractive people. They make more money, get promoted faster, and many times are simply more successful. And according to a new study, they have a much easier time job hunting ...

**Question: Why do people attribute good qualities to attractive people?**

**#2**

**Talmud Brachot 58b**

*One who sees beautiful creatures or beautiful trees should acknowledge the Almighty by reciting the following blessing: "Blessed are You, G-d, our Lord, king of the universe, who has this in His world."*

**Questions:**

* **Is beauty a subjective or an objective quality?**
* **Should everyone feel beautiful?**

**#3**

**Today's Learning Material, part 1**

**12:10-17**

*And there was a famine in the land, and Avram descended to Egypt to sojourn there because the famine was severe in the land.*

*Now it came to pass when he drew near to come to Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "Behold now I know that you are a woman of beautiful appearance.*

*And it will come to pass when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, 'This is his wife,' and they will slay me and let you live.*

*Please say [that] you are my sister, in order that it go well with me because of you, and that my soul may live because of you."*

*And it came to pass when Avram came to Egypt, that the Egyptians saw the woman, that she was exceptionally beautiful.*

*And Pharaoh's princes saw her, and they praised her to Pharaoh, and the woman was taken to the house of Pharaoh.*

*And he benefited Avram for her sake, and he had flocks and cattle and he-donkeys and men servants and maid servants, and she-donkeys and camels.*

*And the Lord plagued Pharaoh [with] great plagues as well as his household, on account of Sarai, Avram's wife.*

**#4**

**Talmud Megillah 15a**

*There have been four exceedingly beautiful women in the world: Sarah, Avigail, Rachav, and Esther.*

**Question: Why does Talmud emphasize the external beauty of these exceptionally righteous women?**

**Talmud Kiddushin 49b**

*Ten measures of beauty descended to the world. Jerusalem took 90% of that beauty and the rest of the world divided up the remaining 10%.*

**Questions:**

* **Why is it important that Jerusalem be a beautiful city? Would it be any less meaningful or holy for the Jewish people if Jerusalem were not the most beautiful city in the world?**
* **Does beauty have intrinsic value?**

**#5**

**Talmud Brochos 57b**

*Three things broaden a person’s mind - a beautiful house, beautiful possessions, and a beautiful wife.*

**Questions:**

* **What is the meaning of this?**
* **What are the positive benefits of beauty?**

**#6**

**Mishlei 31:30**

*Grace is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a G-d-fearing woman shall be praised.*

**Questions:**

* **If all the above-mentioned sources portray a true picture of the Jewish view of physical beauty, then how can this verse can say that beauty is vain and worthless?**
* **What are the negative side effects of beauty?**

**#7**

**Mishlei 11:22**

*Like a gold ring in a pig's nose, is a beautiful woman who abandons reason.*

**Question: What are the implications of this statement?**

**#8**

**Today's Learning Material, part 2**

**Torah Bereshis 23:1**

*And the life of Sarah was one hundred years and twenty years and seven years; these were the years of the life of Sarah.*

**Midrash Bereishis Rabbah 58:1**

*The reason that the word “years” was written after every digit is to tell you that every digit is to be expounded upon individually: when she was one hundred years old, she was like a twenty-year-old regarding sin. Just as a twenty-year-old has not sinned, because she is not liable to punishment, so too when she was one hundred years old, she was without sin. And when she was twenty, she was like a seven-year-old as regards to beauty.*

**Question: What is so beautiful about a 7-year old?**

**#9**

**Question: What's your takeaway from today's discussion?**